

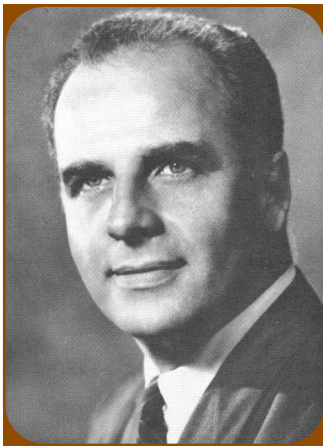


## CHAPTER IV



### WISCONSIN STATE CIVIL SERVICE 1959–PRESENT

A new era for the Bureau of Personnel began to take shape in November 1958, when Governor-elect Gaylord Nelson began preparing his 1959-1961 budget recommendations. Noting that “current revenues cannot meet the demand for appropriations,” Nelson vowed, “I aim at reducing these requests.”<sup>1</sup>



Gaylord Nelson 1960

With the assistance of his financial secretary, Joe Nusbaum, and his chief reorganization technician, Howard Koop, Nelson began planning for the reorganization and consolidation of state government.<sup>2</sup> Their intention was to have one agency that would contain all administrative functions to serve its customers—the other state agencies.

The end result of this plan was legislation creating the Department of Administration, enacted in 1959. The functions of the Bureau of Personnel and the Personnel Board were transferred to the Department of Administration, along with areas such as procurement, budget, and engineering. The new Department of Administration’s mission was to provide centralized oversight over the state’s administrative operations, as a means of ensuring that the state’s fiscal resources were allocated efficiently and that state services were delivered effectively.<sup>3</sup>

Besides the organizational change, the move to the Department of Administration had little impact on the Bureau of Personnel. Carl K. Wettengel continued to serve as the Director of the Bureau. He also served as the head of the State Personnel Board, which was authorized to administer the civil service statutes and to conduct hearings on appeals from state employees related to personnel matters. The Personnel Board consisted of three members and an additional two *ex officio*, nonvoting members.<sup>4</sup>

#### CHANGES TO THE PERSONNEL BOARD

In 1961, legislation was passed that modified the structure of the Personnel Board and changed its authority. The Board was removed from the Department of Administration. The *ex officio* members were eliminated, and the Board was expanded from three members to five members. All of the members were appointed at the discretion of the governor; however, each appointee was required to meet specific qualifications. In addition, two members were required to have personnel management expertise, and one member was required to be an attorney.

The legislation significantly reduced the Board’s authority. Previously the Board had the ability to review and amend rules proposed by the director of the Bureau of Personnel. The 1961 legislation eliminated the Board’s authority to amend rules, leaving it with the authority only to review and approve proposed rules.<sup>5</sup>

### LABOR RELATIONS IN THE LATE 1960S TO EARLY 1970S

The state's relationship with its employees changed significantly in 1967, when the State Employment Labor Relations Act (SELRA) was passed. This legislation gave unions representing state employees the right to collectively bargain with the state on specific subjects. These areas included grievance procedures, application of seniority rights, schedules, time off, interdepartmental transfers, and other non-monetary subjects. Wages, hours, other economic issues, and matters that would affect the civil service system were specifically excluded from collective bargaining.

While the ability to bargain over non-monetary items was an important first step in extending the right of collective bargaining to state employees, the unions advocated strongly for the ability to bargain wages and fringe benefits. To address these concerns, Governor Warren Knowles appointed the Governor's Advisory Committee on State Employment Relations to recommend changes to SELRA.<sup>6</sup> In 1971, in accordance with the committee's recommendations, SELRA was amended to extend to represented state employees the right to collectively bargain wages, hours, and working conditions. State labor history is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

### MODERNIZATION OF CIVIL SERVICE

The 1971 legislation also significantly redefined the rules and regulations governing personnel management in state government, as recommended by a task force that conducted an extensive review of the state's civil service system.<sup>7</sup> The group's task was to identify ways to modernize and improve the civil service system.

Daniel Wallock, who later served as the administrator of the division of merit recruitment and selection, observed:

While a great many other changes have since been made, the concepts contained in this 1971 legislation clearly laid the modern foundation of the system we have today . . . virtually every personnel management area was significantly redefined and/or clarified.<sup>8</sup>

Management positions in state service were particularly impacted by the 1971 changes. Top-level management

positions within the classified civil service were not exempt from the merit process. In many situations, administrators and agency heads felt that they needed more flexibility to fill upper management positions.

The career executive program was established to meet these concerns. The career executive program applied to high-level managers in the classified civil service. Initial appointment to a career executive position was through competition. However, once a person was in the program, more flexibility was permitted. The law permitted a career executive to be reassigned to another comparable position without competition. The program thus gave state agency leaders more flexibility to assign duties to high-level managers, and gave career executives employees more flexibility in career advancement.

The act also authorized selection procedures designed to promote the hiring of disadvantaged and disabled individuals; modified probationary periods; eliminated some citizenship and residency requirements; and allowed the personnel director to establish classifications with approval from the Personnel Board.

### INNOVATIONS TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY AND RETENTION

The state initiated several programs designed to support current and potential state employees. These programs complemented the civil service by fostering productivity and helping avert unnecessary turnover of highly-qualified workers.

For example, the employee assistance program was established to help employees obtain assistance with problems related to alcohol and other drugs. This program still exists and has been expanded to provide employees with the means to obtain assistance with any personal issue that may affect their performance at work.

Not all experimental programs to support state employees succeeded in the long term. Project JOIN (an acronym for Job Options and Innovations) lasted approximately two and a half years in the late 1970s. Its purpose was "to research job sharing in professional and para-professional positions within Wisconsin civil service." The goal behind this project was to find ways to accommodate flexible and part-time work

schedules for employees who could not or chose not to work forty hours a week.<sup>9</sup> Although Project JOIN was not renewed after its two-and-one-half year run, flexible hour schedules and part-time schedules are still permitted when they can be accommodated in light of state business needs. The state also piloted a daycare center in 1987 in an effort to enhance worker productivity. However, the pilot failed due to lack of funding.<sup>10</sup>

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, which was implemented in the mid-1970s and lasted about six years, was a training program intended to encourage agencies to hire and re-train people who had been unemployed for some time, including minorities and women in non-traditional jobs.<sup>11</sup> The program attempted not only to give agencies more hiring flexibility in a tight labor market, but also to open another door to state employment to these potential employees.

These programs, while short-lived, represent a healthy spirit of innovation within the civil service system. This willingness to experiment has allowed the system to adapt to the changing labor market, evolving needs of the state government workplace, and increasing diversity of state employees and state job applicants.

### THE STEVENS-OFFNER COMMISSION AND CREATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

Carl K. Wettengel served as director of state personnel from the late 1950s to the late 1970s. Upon his retirement, the Personnel Board was faced with the challenge of filling the position. In its effort to do so, the Personnel Board found itself in the center of controversy. Filling the position took over three years. The Board was accused of favoritism in the examination process and other misconduct. Two members of the Board resigned as a result of these charges; two other members were removed from office after they were found guilty of malfeasance. One newspaper columnist described the fallout from this incident as “a loss of creditability for Wisconsin’s civil service system.”<sup>12</sup>

In 1976, the Employment Relations Study Commission, subsequently referred to as the Stevens-Offner Commission after its co-chairs, was appointed by Governor Patrick Lucey. The commission was charged with reviewing Wisconsin’s civil service system. The

Commission had been convened due to a perception that the system was:

so rigid that those in charge of agencies cannot make the best use of personnel resources. Employees confront needlessly stagnated career opportunities and cannot make the best use of their talents and interests. Selection processes, often unwittingly, screen out able women, minorities, and handicapped, contributing to continued imbalances in the civil service.<sup>13</sup>



Patrick Lucey 1973

Echoing concerns expressed at the time of the 1929 reforms, the Commission explained that the problem was not what the civil service system prevented, noting that the system had “remained free of patronage and favoritism,” but rather what the system failed to accomplish as a “positive tool” for public administration.<sup>14</sup>

The Commission’s report led to legislation enacted in 1977 that implemented major changes to Wisconsin’s civil service system and its administrative structure. The 1977 act created the Department of Employment Relations (DER) to direct, manage, and administer the state government personnel system.<sup>15</sup> In recommending the creation of a new department, the Commission stated that its intent was to “provide the State of Wisconsin with an organizational arrangement for its personnel system that is efficient, insulated from forces that might compromise the merit system, and responsive to the needs and wishes of the public.”

The Commission perceived an inherent tension between the goals of accountability and insulation: increasing the discretion of state officials in making appointments or other personnel decisions may, if abused, lead to favoritism; while policies intended to insulate the system from favoritism may result in a system that is too rigid and unresponsive.<sup>16</sup> The Commission sought to balance these two goals in its recommendations regarding the new Department of Employment Relations.

To increase accountability to the governor and legislature, the Commission recommended that the head of the new Department of Employment Relations be appointed directly by the governor and confirmed by the state senate. To provide better “insulation”—i.e., to protect the integrity of the civil service system—the Commission recommended a separate appointment process for the administrator of a division of merit employment within the department.

Under the Commission’s proposal, the administrator was to be recruited through a competitive process, with candidates reviewed by a screening panel consisting of the chair of the Personnel Advisory Council, the chair of the Equal Rights Council, the speaker of the assembly, the president *pro tem* of the senate, the president of the State League of Women Voters, and the chair of the state Personnel Management Council.<sup>17</sup> Notably, the screening panel included neither the governor nor the secretary of the Department of Employment Relations. The panel was to provide a list of ten names to the department secretary, who would appoint an administrator. The appointment would then be subject to senate confirmation.

The legislation that was ultimately enacted provided a more streamlined appointment process for the merit employment administrator, primarily by dropping the screening panel of specified officials. However, the legislation retained a merit-based recruitment; selection by the governor from a list of certified names; and confirmation by the senate. Whereas the secretary served at the pleasure of the governor, the administrator was appointed to a fixed five-year term. These two appointment processes exemplify the Commission’s aims of simultaneously providing both accountability to, and insulation from, the political process.

The Commission also sought to bring more flexibility into the state’s hiring processes, which it viewed as unreasonably rigid. The most significant change it recommended was modification of the storied “rule of three,” a traditional feature of many civil service systems. Under the “rule of three,” only the three applicants receiving the highest score on the civil service examination would be “certified”; the hiring authority could interview only the certified candidates and was obliged to appoint one of the three for the position. As the Commission observed, this rule “placed heavy reliance on objective examinations, limit[ing] the discretion of appointing authorities.”<sup>18</sup>

The Commission recommended replacing the rule of three with a new rule that would permit certification of five names, or up to ten names if more than fifty qualified applicants were registered. The Commission acknowledged that five was just as arbitrary as three, but felt that some flexibility would be gained by the increase in certified applicants. The legislature enacted the Commission’s change in 1977. In later years, the rule was amended again to eliminate the requirement of any fixed number of certified names.<sup>19</sup>

The Commission also recommended expanding collective bargaining to permit the state and the state employee unions to bargain both the assignment of positions to classifications and the assignment of classifications to pay ranges. The Commission reasoned that these topics related to compensation, and permitting them to be bargained would not undermine any merit-system principle.

However, this proposal did not make the cut for the 1977 legislation. In 1987, the legislature ultimately extended collective bargaining to the assignment of classifications to pay ranges, leaving the assignment of positions to classifications under the authority of the Department of Employment Relations.

### *Recollections of a State Employee*

*I started in the civil service system as a teacher at the Green Bay Reformatory in 1948 and ended my career as the superintendent of Ethan Allen School in 1985. I enjoyed each step in my career, especially the direct contact with the kids. I always tried to impart knowledge. At Wales I made time for direct services after school hours from 3:00 to 4:30 pm. I believe that institutions were created to fill a human need; they are not just a place to work. Grown “kids” are still in contact with me. Lots of the kids who went through the system are working in professional positions.*

— Roland C. Hershman



Another key proposal for improving democratic accountability was that positions with major policy-making responsibility at all state agencies should be unclassified, with appointments at the discretion and pleasure of the agency head. At the time of the Commission's study, a number of such positions had been made unclassified on a piecemeal basis, mostly in three of the larger agencies. The Commission recommended a consistent approach to provide more accountability and responsiveness in the executive agencies.<sup>20</sup> Although the Commission proposed that the administrator of merit employment be authorized to designate the top agency positions that should be unclassified, the legislature instead identified the unclassified positions at each agency statutorily.

In addition to those highlighted above, the Commission proposed a slew of other changes to the civil service system, many of which were designed to improve the mobility and advancement of employees within state government. The Commission also recommended the creation of a state personnel commission to hear all appeals in personnel matters, noting that the system then in effect was a "tangled web of routes and rights," involving multiple appellate bodies with overlapping jurisdiction.

The Stevens-Offner Commission's comprehensive and perceptive report remains an important analysis of the civil service system. The Commission elucidated the fundamental tension between providing a government that is accountable to the people, while insulating the civil service from partisan pressures. The need to balance these competing values within the system's policies and rules is just as compelling today.

### REMEDYING INEQUITIES

In the 1980s, several initiatives were implemented to ensure that the civil service system provided fair and equal treatment to job applicants and employees who belonged to historically disadvantaged groups.

In the mid-1980s, a task force was convened to examine the issue of comparable worth and pay equity. As a result of this task force, legislation was passed in 1985 that required the state to remedy any pay inequities between the genders and the races. These actions reflect the state's commitment to achieve equal pay for equal work within the civil service.<sup>21</sup>

The 1980s brought other modifications to the way the civil service system operated. For example, in 1985, the United States Supreme Court held that the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) applied to public sector employers. When originally enacted, public sector employers were exempt. The Supreme Court's 1985 decision standardized the application of the Act's minimum wage, overtime pay, child labor, and record-keeping provisions to encompass both private and public sector employers.<sup>22</sup> While the decision did not significantly affect state policies and practices then in effect, it clarified the applicability of federal employment protections to state government and its employees.

Another new program was the cooperative education program (CEP). The CEP was designed to recruit students enrolled in two- or four-year colleges within Wisconsin to apply for state government jobs. Special emphasis was placed on recruiting members of groups targeted for affirmative action goals. The program's intent was to provide a relevant and challenging part-time work experience to college students, and then to transition them to full-time permanent positions after they graduated. The program continues to be a viable option for recruiting qualified applicants, particularly members of target groups, for entry-level civil service positions.

Expanded certification was another policy designed to increase equal access to state jobs for members of groups targeted for affirmative action. Initially implemented by administrative rule, the program was codified in the Wisconsin statutes in 1985. It authorized the administrator of the division of merit recruitment and selection to certify additional qualified applicants for interviewing and selection. In addition to certifying the five applicants with the highest scores on the civil service examination, the administrator was authorized to certify additional names of women, minorities, and disabled people who had also passed the examination.<sup>23</sup> This policy gave state agencies more opportunities to interview and hire qualified women, minorities, and disabled persons for civil service positions. It remains in effect to this day.

In 1988, the Department of Employment Relations began offering training workshops on the state civil service examination process to recipients of public assistance. The goal of this effort was to assist aid recipients in navigating the hiring process and obtaining employment with Wisconsin state government, allowing them to achieve independence from public

assistance programs.<sup>24</sup> Today, the Office of State Employment Relations continues to pursue this goal by working with state job centers and private sector partners, as well as state agencies, to ensure that public aid recipients have access to state civil service positions.

The history of the state's affirmative action efforts is outlined in greater detail in Chapter 6.

### IMPROVING THE HIRING PROCESS

In the 1990s, the Department of Employment Relations continued to modify and refine civil service rules to streamline the hiring process for both state agencies and job applicants. Programs such as the entry professional program and the critical recruitment program were founded in an effort to permit faster hiring for particular types of positions. Testing also became more flexible; for example, applicants were allowed to “walk in” to test at civil service examination centers without applying in advance.

### THE COMMISSION ON THE REFORM OF THE STATE HUMAN RESOURCE SYSTEM

In 1994, Governor Tommy G. Thompson established the Commission for the Study of Administrative Value and Efficiency, known as the SAVE Commission. Its mission was to define the role of state and local government for the future. Several of the Commission's recommendations related to the state civil service system. As a result of the SAVE Commission's report, Governor Thompson established the Commission on the Reform of the State's Human Resource System.

Like its predecessors, the Commission on the Reform of the State's Human Resource System viewed its goal “not...to ‘tear down’ the basic structure of Wisconsin's civil service system, but to streamline it, modernize it, and make it less rigid.”<sup>25</sup>

Legislation was enacted in 1997 that implemented many of the Commission's recommendations. The changes included:

- Implementing a flexible rule for certifications. The new law allowed the administrator of the Division of Merit

Recruitment and Selection to determine the appropriate number of names to certify based on statistical methods and agency needs.

- Repealing the requirement that classified positions be filled only by Wisconsin residents.
- Repealing the ban on out-of-state recruitment for classified positions.
- Allowing employment registers to expire in three months, instead of six months. This change allowed the employment registers to be refreshed with new applicants more frequently.
- Repealing the requirement that one member of an oral examination panel be from outside the state civil service.
- Permitting non-competitive appointment of disabled veterans to entry professional and non-professional vacancies.

### PAY AND CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM REFORM

The Commission also made a variety of recommendations to modernize the state's classification and compensation systems. The Commission noted that the classification system, which then consisted of over 2,000 classifications, had become an unwieldy method of compensating employees based on their skills and experience. The Commission recommended reducing the number of classifications and developing compensation policies that would reward performance and permit greater flexibility for pay on appointment. The outcome of this recommendation was the development of the broadbanding pay system and streamlining of the classification system.

The civil service system had created a traditional, hierarchical classification and compensation structure with a large number of job titles (classifications) and a few straightforward pay ranges. Though inflexible, the system prevented salary manipulation and provided predictable expenditures for budgeting purposes.

In past decades, the stability of a civil service career helped insulate the state from some of the recruitment and retention problems common in the private sector. By the mid-1990s, however, the state workforce had developed severe recruitment and retention problems due to competition from the external labor market. The appeal of a lifetime career in state civil service had waned for new generations of employees taking state jobs. As a result, the existing inflexible compensation policies had become less effective in fostering recruitment and retention.

In response to this changing labor environment and in accordance with the Commission's recommendations, the Department of Employment Relations developed a broadbanding compensation system. Broadbanding provides more flexibility than systems traditionally used in the public sector. It consolidates many job classifications into broader definitions, and combines salary ranges into fewer pay bands with comparatively wide salary ranges. Broadbanding systems had been used extensively in the private sector and by the federal government before being adopted in the State of Wisconsin.

Broadbanding was implemented in the 1997-1999 Compensation Plan for non-represented senior managers and information systems professionals, occupations that faced intense labor market competition. Many classification titles were eliminated and employees were positioned within the pay bands based on labor market data or occupational affiliation. Fixed pay increases were abolished in favor of flexible pay increases.

In April 1998, as part of their collective bargaining agreement, the Wisconsin Federation of Teachers (now AFT-Wisconsin) agreed to broadbanding for represented information systems professionals. Over the next several years, broadbanding was expanded to other

### *Recollections of a State Employee*

*I was a student at the university and worked in the Physics department to make extra money. I was a radar tech in the service and was interested in electronics but the physics department didn't teach electronics. In the spring of '49 the person running the electronics shop quit and went back to get his degree. I said I would do it so I quit school. This was an exciting place. Radar guys from MIT were going to school here. Famous people came through here. Going to lunch with them, it was fun. It is still fun.*

—Myron Murray, longest-serving current state employee

represented employee groups. Broadbanding now covers over 10,000 represented and nonrepresented classified state employees. Streamlining of the classification system due to broadbanding and other reforms has led to a reduction in the number of classifications from a high of over 2,000 to around 1,800 in 2005, with additional reductions planned.

While the system has provided more pay flexibility, simplified

the classification system, and addressed recruitment and retention issues, the system has not been without controversy. The press, state legislators, labor unions, and others raised concerns periodically about the discretion the system grants state officials in making salary decisions. In response to these concerns, the Office of State Employment Relations strengthened its oversight and monitoring in 2003 to ensure that agencies utilize the program appropriately and consistently.

### **AUTOMATING PERSONNEL TRANSACTIONS**

Technology has also played a significant role in improving the civil service system. For much of the system's 100 year history, personnel transactions were conducted manually. In 1988, the state implemented electronic systems that began to replace many manual functions. With the launch of the WiscJobs web site in 2002, job announcements can now be viewed over the Internet by job seekers around the globe. In addition, applicants can submit job applications, take certain civil service exams, receive their scores, and track the progress of recruitments online. WiscJobs includes a secure site that gives agency managers and human resources personnel immediate access to applications and automates many hiring procedures.

## *Recollections of a State Employee*

My service as a state employee began in March 1937, late in the Great Depression and would continue for 41 years until 1978. Many applicants sought state jobs and participated in various civil service examinations. Examinations were given on Saturdays in 12 to 15 high schools and were repeated every one to three years.

Following participation in a written and oral exam, I was certified along with two others for an entry level personnel examination position. I served a six month probationary period, after which I became eligible for vacation at the rate of three weeks for a full year of service. I likewise became eligible for sick leave credits at the rate of one day for each month of service. The state salary plan established two salary minimums for employment. Professional positions were offered \$150 per month starting salary. Labor and clerical positions started at \$75 per month. No probationary salary increases were authorized.

Offices were open for business 38 or 39 hours per week, varying from summer to winter. Lunch hours were from 12:00 to 1:30. Parking in Capitol driveways was unregulated and generally unavailable. Time for coffee breaks wasn't authorized; however, many employees did participate in a break. Governor Rennebohm looked with disfavor at the employees that left the building for breaks and initiated a "milk cart" tour of offices. That didn't last long, however, as the milk cart was too heavy for the "dairy maid" that pushed it.

No offices were air conditioned and it became extremely hot after three days of hot weather. Windows were closed at night, thus trapping all the heat inside. Men could smoke at their desks, but women were expected to go to the restrooms to smoke.

Overtime was not regulated and generally ignored or handled informally.

Business travel by car was reimbursed monthly for miles traveled. No travel was authorized at one's headquarters city. Travel by bus or train was frequently the practice between major cities.

No pension program existed and no participation in social security was available. Initially there was no state program for health insurance. At fellow employees' requests, I initiated participation in an employee-paid program within the Bureau of Personnel. Each quarter, I collected the necessary fees and sent them to an insurance carrier. Two years later, the legislature approved a state plan.

During my first three years of service, I received no salary increases, nor did anyone else except my superior. When salary increases were given, funds to pay for them were generated by hiring replacements at a salary lower than a terminated employee. Recruitment at a salary above the minimum was not allowed.

Most institutional employees received two weeks of annual leave, not three as provided other employees. Also, in institutions, there were many positions that required employees to live on the grounds. Pay day came once a month but was quite well accepted on that schedule. Written job specifications for many positions were not proposed until 1948.

During the Depression, opportunities for promotions were few because turnover was light. I was able to acquire promotions as time went on and I became chief of classification and compensation, a position I held for ten years. That involved considerable liaison with the legislature's Joint Committee on Finance. Later with the Department of Natural Resources, I served as administrator of the administrative division which included coordination of activities of eight bureaus.

My tour of duty concluded with retirement with a pension and social security benefits in 1978. At that time, my accrued sick leave credits were converted to cash benefits for health insurance and that paid my health insurance for over 20 years.

All in all, I was very pleased with a career under Wisconsin civil service. Most of the shortcomings of the programs in earlier years were remedied by the legislature and dedicated efforts by administrators and the Personnel Board.

—William A. Matson



## THE OFFICE OF STATE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

Under the pressure of a crushing state budget deficit of over \$3 billion, Governor Jim Doyle's budget for the 2003–2005 biennium proposed a variety of measures to streamline the administrative operations of state government, including human resources management. One such proposal was to eliminate the Department of Employment Relations and return state personnel oversight to the Department of Administration. After some modification in the course of the legislative process, the 2003–2005 biennial budget act created the Office of State Employment Relations, replacing the Department of Employment Relations.

The Office was attached to the Department of Administration for purposes of supporting its administrative needs, permitting the new agency to eliminate its division of administrative services and reduce its budget by over \$1 million each year. The remaining three divisions of the Department of Employment Relations—merit recruitment and selection, affirmative action, and compensation and labor relations—were transferred intact into the new office.

The legislation creating the Office of State Employment Relations preserved distinct appointment processes for the agency head and the administrator of its division of merit recruitment and selection, as conceived by the Stevens-Offner Commission in the mid-1970s for the Department of Employment Relations. The director of the Office of State Employment Relations is appointed by, and serves at the pleasure of, the governor. By contrast, the administrator of the division of merit recruitment and selection is recruited through a merit process, appointed from a certified list by the governor, and is confirmed by the senate to serve a term of

five years. The new institutional structure thus retains a mechanism to balance the goals of democratic accountability and civil service integrity.

The 2003–2005 biennial budget act also abolished the Personnel Commission. Its caseload of personnel appeals was divided between the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission (WERC) and the Equal Rights Division at the Department of Workforce Development.<sup>26</sup> Employees' rights to appeal personnel decisions remained intact, other than the change of venue.

As described above, the Wisconsin Civil Service System has gone through major institutional changes, added key programs, and adopted innovative personnel management practices and technology since 1959. The goals of promoting state government's accountability to the public, while protecting the integrity and stability of the civil service, have remained constant. However, because the environment within which the system operates is always in flux, these goals remain something of a moving target. Changes in the external labor force, technological advances, altered workforce expectations, shifting demographics, and myriad other factors require the balance between these goals to be readjusted frequently.

As the 100 year history of the civil service system makes evident, the system is not and cannot become static. The civil service system's adaptability has allowed it not only to survive, but to enter its second century of existence with renewed vitality, flexibility, and strength.

—Denise Kobout,  
Susan Crawford

## TIMELINE OF WISCONSIN CIVIL SERVICE • 1959–PRESENT

**1959**

The Bureau of Personnel, previously an independent agency, became a bureau within the newly created Department of Administration (DOA).

**1965**

A Joint Civil Service Study Committee (the Kellett Committee) was established to review the entire civil service system. The Committee's recommendations were implemented in statutory changes in 1971.

**1967**

The first state collective bargaining law was passed, permitting bargaining of non-wage items.

**1969**

The Governor's Advisory Committee on State Employment Relations (the Young Committee) was established to review experience under the State Employment Labor Relations Act (SELRA) and make recommendations for change.

**1971**

Legislation was enacted that revised the civil service laws and SELRA, including bargaining of wages.

**1972**

Governor Patrick Lucey issued an executive order creating an affirmative action unit in the Bureau of Personnel.

**1973**

The career executive program, authorized by statute in 1971, became operative.

The state negotiated the first collective bargaining agreements under the revised SELRA with the Wisconsin State Employees Association (now Wisconsin State Employees Union (WSEU)).

**1974**

The employee assistance program began.

**1977**

The recommendations of the Stevens-Offner Civil Service Study Commission were enacted. These legislative changes abolished the Bureau of Personnel and authorized the creation of the Department of Employment Relations (DER). The legislation also created the Personnel Commission to review and decide appeals of personnel decisions.

**1978**

DER was created as a cabinet-level department.

**1979–1981**

DER implemented expanded certification to further the state's efforts to achieve a balanced workforce.

**1984**

A comparable worth task force was created by Governor Anthony Earl, committing the state to the concept of gender pay equity.

**1988**

DER initiated a program to help qualified public benefits recipients compete for state jobs.

Automated human resource hiring systems become operational, replacing manual systems.

**1998**

Statutory changes were enacted to allow more flexible certifications, to lengthen reinstatement to five years, and to repeal residency requirements for job applicants.

Broadband compensation was negotiated into the contract of the Wisconsin Professional Employees Council (WPEC), reducing the number of pay ranges and classifications and giving more flexibility to agencies in setting pay.

**2002**

WiscJobs, an online state job application and testing system, was launched.

**2003**

DER was re-created as the Office of State Employment Relations (OSER), attached to DOA for administrative purposes. The Personnel Commission was abolished and its case load was transferred to the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission and the Equal Rights Division at the Department of Workforce Development.

**2005**

The State of Wisconsin celebrates the civil service centennial.